

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJ: ANTI-PARTY SLOGANS APPEAR IN LENINGRAD

1. SUMMARY: ANTI-PARTY SLOGANS RECENTLY HAVE APPEARED ON THE PETER AND PAUL FORTRESS AND ON THE HOUSE OF POLITICAL EDUCATION NEAR SMOLNYY. THIS IS REPORTEDLY THE SECOND TIME SUCH SLOGANS HAVE APPEARED IN LENINGRAD THIS YEAR. SLOGANS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN WORK OF DISAFFECTED INDIVIDUALS RATHER THAN MANIFESTATIONS OF ANY ORGANIZATION, AND A KGB CRACKDOWN HAS NETTED AT LEAST TWO CULPRITS. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSULATE GENERAL DPO WAS TOLD, SEPT. 23, BY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE WITH VERY GOOD TIES TO DISSIDENT COMMUNITY THAT SINCE BEGINNING OF AUGUST ANTI-PARTY SLOGANS HAVE APPEARED ON THE WALLS OF THE PETER AND PAUL FORTRESS AND ON THE HOUSE OF POLITICAL EDUCATION NEAR SMOLNYY - A SHRINE OF PARTY HISTORY. SLOGANS WHICH APPEARED AT THE PETER AND PAUL FORTRESS REPORTEDLY READ "DOWN WITH KPSU" AND "YOU WANT TO ROT OUR SOULS, BUT WE REFUSE TO BE IMPRISONED." HOUSE OF POLITICAL EDUCATION SLOGANS REPORTEDLY WERE "KPSU IS THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE," "DOWN WITH THE PARTY BOURGEOISIE" AND "LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF AMERICA."

3. THIS REPORTEDLY IS THE SECOND TIME THIS YEAR THAT
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SUCH ANTI-PARTY SLOGANS HAVE BEEN OBSERVED. IN APRIL

TWO LENINGRAD STREETCARS WERE SMEARED WITH THE SLOGANS, "FREEDOM FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS" AND "FREEDOM FOR TVERDOKHLEBOV" - IM-PRISONED LEADER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. ONE VERSION GOES THAT THE STREETCARS HAD TO BE DRIVEN CLEAR THROUGH THE CITY TO A PAINT REMOVAL SITE DURING WHICH SLOGANS WERE SEEN BY MULTITUDES OF LENINGRADERS.

4. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, THE MOST RECENT SLOGAN PAINTINGS RESULTED IN AN IMMEDIATE KGB CRACKDOWN. ON SEPT. 13 AT LEAST SIX APARTMENTS OF LENINGRAD DISSIDENTS WERE SEARCHED IN LENINGRAD AND ONE IN MOSCOW. TWO PERSONS, "LENINGRAD DISSIDENT ARTISTS RYBAKOV AND VOLKOV," WERE ARRESTED IN THESE CRACKDOWNS. UNDER INTERROGATION THEY REPORTEDLY ADMITTED THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE SLOGAN PAINTINGS. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS WERE INVOLVED. HOWEVER, SLOGAN PAINTINGS REPORTEDLY WERE THE WORK OF "DISSAFFECTED INDIVIDUALS" RATHER THAN ANY WELL-ORGANIZED ANTI-REGIME ORGANIZATION.

5. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER ANY TRIALS WILL BE HANDLED QUIETLY BEHIND SCENES OR WHETHER THE LENINGRAD AUTHORITIES WILL CONSIDER RECENT INCIDENTS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO WARRANT SOME SORT OF SHOW TRIAL. HOWEVER, CURRENT HARD LINE CULTURAL DIRECTIVE THAT NO RPT NO FURTHER "DEMONSTRATIVE" PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS OF NON-OFFICIAL ART WILL BE TOLERATED AND THE ENERGY AND IMMEDIACY WITH WHICH KGB CRACKED DOWN ON LATEST SLOGAN PAINTING INCIDENTS MAKE IT PLAIN THAT THE AUTHORITIES HERE ARE DETERMINED TO KEEP BOUNDARIES OF PERMISSIBLE DISSENT WITHIN VERY SMALL, TIGHTLY CONTROLLED PARAMETERS. FYI. ON SEPT. 20, CONGEN P&C OFFICER GEIS RECEIVED TELEPHONE INQUIRY FROM MOSCOW WIRE SERVICE REP. RE REPORT OF ANTI-PARTY SLOGANS AT SAME LOCATIONS. HE WAS TOLD THAT WE HAD NO INFORMATION ON SUCH ACTIVITIES WHICH WAS TRUE AT THE TIME. WE HAVE HEARD THAT WIRE SERVICE STORY WAS FILED ON SUBJECT.

NEUBERT

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